

“grey worsted,” “mixt blue Yarn,” “White ribb’d worsted”: Stockings of Runaways Advertised in Rhode Island

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Introduction No study has attempted a detailed look at stockings within a population of the lower sort until now. What material were stockings most frequently made of? What colors were common, unusual, or absent? Are reenactors and interpreters accurately portraying what was common? This study answers these questions by looking at stockings worn, carried with, and stolen by runaways advertised in all Rhode Island newspapers from 1760 through 1783.

Discussion Table 1 presents all information about stockings found in runaway descriptions in Rhode Island newspapers from 1760 through 1783.^{1,2} Not all are from Rhode Island; for example, some sailors simply jumped ship in Rhode Island. Other runaways were from nearby states and were thought to be headed to or through Rhode Island. One Negro “RAN away from John De Peyster, living in New York [p. 65, v. 2]”. Therefore this study may represent a larger area than just Rhode Island.

The gender of the runaway is given in the table. Only four pair of stockings are known to have been in the possession of females, and three of those are known to be stolen. Nonetheless, the conclusions of this study may apply to both sexes; most merchant advertisements do not specify what gender stockings are for, allowing us to assume that either sex may wear them. Most runaway descriptions do not associate a gender with the stockings, so the gender has been assumed to be that of the person carrying the stockings.³

Some runaways are advertised in more than one Rhode Island newspaper. Including redundant entries could skew the data. Because of this, redundant ads were counted only once, but two page references are listed for those ads in Table 1. Some redundant ads are not identical but do give similar information. Each of these were examined to see if more could be learned about the

Table 1: Stocking descriptions for the lower sort from Rhode Island newspaper runaway ads, 1760-1783. A carrot (^) indicates the stockings were worn by the

stockings. This is tedious work and the possibility exists that some redundant adds were missed.

Stocking Description	Sex	Date	Page #
old Stockings^	1 m	Apr. 60	29 V2
white Stockings,^	1 m	May 61	30 V2
gray yarn Stockings.^	1 m	Apr. 62	32 V2
blue Yarn Stockings;^	1 m	Nov. 62	34 V2
a pair of gray Yarn Stockings,*	1 m	Jul. 63	35 V2
Pair of blue Worsted Stockings^	1 m	Oct. 63	4 VI
black Stockings,^	1 m	Oct.63	36 V2
old Pair of blue Stockings.^	1 m	Jun. 64	5 VI
a Pair of old Stocking Leggings, of a grey Colour,^	1 m	Jun. 64	6 VI
ribb’d mottled worsted Stockings,^	1 m	Aug. 64	38 V2
Yarn Stockings^	1 m	Nov. 64	7 VI
Sheeps Black Stockings,^	1 m	Dec. 64	39 V2
black Stockings,^	1 m	Jan. 65	7 VI
a blue Pair of Yarn Stockings;^	1 m	Mar. 64	37 V2, 5 V1
Stockings of the same Colour, [black and blue]^	1 m	Apr. 65	7 VI
Worsted Stockings: ^	1 m	Aug.65	40 V2
a Pair of black ribb’d Stockings,^	1 m	Sep. 65	41 V2
black Stockings^	1 m	Nov. 65	42 V2
a pair of yarn Stockings:*	1 m	Mar. 66	44 V2

runaway, an asterisk () indicates the stockings were taken with the runaway, a question mark (?) indicates the stockings were either taken with or worn by the*

runaways and an apostrophe (!) indicates the stockings were stolen by the runaway. The page numbers are from the sources referenced in Notes 1 and 2.

Stocking Description	Sex	Date	Page #
a Pair of old Stockings^	1 m	May 66	44 V2
blue ribb'd Yarn Stockings^	1 m	May 66	45 V2
blue gray yarn Stockings^	1 m	Oct. 66	46 V2
Yarn Stockings,^	1 m	Mar. 67	47 V2
grey Yarn Stockings,^	1 m	Oct. 67	9 VI
white Yarn Stockings^	1 m	Dec. 67	48 V2
Stockings^	1 m	Feb. 68	48 V2
black Stockings,^	1 m	May 68	9 VI
black worsted Stockings,[^]... one Pair of pale blue worsted Stockings,[*]	2 m	Jun. 68	49 V2
a pair of mixt blue Yarn Stockings [^], a Pair of Worsted ditto^	2 m	Jul. 68	50 V2
Stockings,^	1 m	Aug. 68	51 V2
deep blue Yarn stockings [^]... two Pair of Yarn Stockings one light blue, the other mixed.*	3 m	Nov. 68	11 VI
grey Yarn Stockings?	1 m	Dec. 68	12 VI
white... Stockings: ^	1 m	Jan. 69	52 V2
one Pair of Stockings,*	1 m	Mar. 69	12 VI
Stockings: ^	1 m	Mar. 69	53 V2
Stockings,^	1 m	Aug. 69	54 V2
white, ribb'd, worsted Stockings,?	1 m	Nov. 69	55 V2
four Pair of Stockings*	4 m	May 70	15 VI
a Pair of light blue Stockings[*] and white ditto,[*]	2 m	Jun. 70	58 V2
four Pair of Stockings*	4 m	Aug. 70	16 VI
three pair of Stockings*	3 m	Aug. 70	16 VI
a Pair of Stockings,!	1 m	Aug. 70	57 V2

Stocking Description	Sex	Date	Page #
blue Stockings,^	1 m	Dec. 70	17 VI
a Pair of fine Womens Cotton stockings... a Pair of Mens Thread Stockings,!	1 f, 1 m	Dec. 70	17 VI
three Pair of Stockings?	3 m	Jan. 71	17 VI
Stockings without feet^	1 m	Jun. 71	19 VI
two Pair of Stockings?	2 m	Aug. 71	19 VI
light cloth Worsted Stockings,?	1 m	Aug. 71	19 VI
an old Pair of Stockings without Feet,^	1 m	Aug. 71	59 V2
mixed blue and white Stockings [^]... a pair of mixed blue and white Stockings*	2 m	Dec. 71	20 VI
old... Stockings,^	1 m	Dec. 71	62 V2
Yarn Stockings,^	1 m	Apr. 72	21 VI
Sheep's Gray Stockings^	1 m	Apr. 72	63 V2, 22 V1
Yarn Stockings.^	1 m	Apr. 72	140 V2

two pair of Stockings, something old, one Pair of them Worsted?	2 m	May 72	22 VI
Stockings,?	1 m	Jun. 72	23 VI, 140 V2
stockings,^	1 m	Aug. 72	65 V2
[t]hread stockings:?	1 m	Sep. 72	64 V2
worsted stockings,^	1 m	Oct. 72	64 V2
old... stockings, [^]... one pair of newly footed, gray yarn stockings,?	2 m	Nov. 72	65 V2
blue Yarn Stockings,^	1 m	Feb. 73	25 VI, 142 V2
one pair of blue yarn stockings, and one pair of mixed ribb'd worsted stockings,^	2 m	Feb. 73	66 V2
mixed Stockings,^	1 m	Jul. 73	26 VI
homespun Linen Stockings,?	1 m	Jul. 73	27 VI

Table 1, continued

(^) - worn by the runaway (*) - taken with the runaway (?) - either taken with or worn (!) - stolen by the runaway

Stocking Description	Sex	Date	Page #
several pair of stockings*	3 m	Aug. 73	69 V2
dark clouded Worsted Stockings,^	1 m	Sept. 73	29 VI, 69 V2
one Pair of pale blue ribb'd and one pair of Linen Stockings;?	2 m	Sept. 73	29 VI
a new pair of worsted Stockings,^	1 m	Sept. 73	30 VI
a Pair of blue and White Crape Stockings?	1 m	Oct. 73	30 VI
three Pair of Yarn Stockings, *	3 m	Feb. 74	31 VI
dark coloured stockings^	1 f	Feb. 74	71 V2
gray yarn stockings,^	1 m	Mar. 74	71 V2
grey Stockings,^	1 m	May 74	32 VI
tow stockings[^]... a pair of stockings,[*]	2 m	May 74	72 V2
white stockings,^	1 m	Jun. 74	72 V2
white and black stockings,?	1 m	Jul. 74	72 V2
white yarn stockings,^	1 m	Aug. 74	73 V2
white ribbed Yarn Stockings,^	1 m	Sept. 74	34 VI
sundry pair of stockings?	1 m	Oct. 74	76 V2
black worsted stockings^	1 m	Nov. 74	77 V2
grey Stockings,?	1 m	Nov. 74	142 V2
white Yarn Stockings^	1 m	Jan. 75	35 V1, 78 V2
grey worsted stockings^	1 m	Mar. 75	79 V2
a light coloured pair of worsted stockins,^	1 m	Mar. 75	79 V2
black stockings^	1 m	Apr. 75	80 V2
grey Stockings,?	1 m	May 75	36 VI
one pair of grey yarn stockings,^	1 m	Jun. 75	80 V2
yarn stockings,^	1 m	Sep. 75	82 V2

Stocking Description	Sex	Date	Page #
Stockings much of the same Colour [black and white mixed],^	1 m	Mar. 76	39 VI
grey Yarn Stockings?	1 m	Apr. 76	39 VI
a Pair of black and white Yarn Stockings^	1 m	May 76	41 VI
white or grey yarn stockings^,	1 m	Oct. 76	44 VI
Stockings of a mixed Colour,^	1 m	Apr. 77	58 VI
Yarn Stockings: ^	1 m	Jun. 77	70 VI
two pair of cotton stockings,!	2 f	Jun. 77	68 VI
white Yarn Stockings^	1 m	Jul. 77	72 VI
two Pair of Stockings!	2 m	Aug. 77	75 VI
a Parcel of Stockings?	4?m	Sep. 77	60 V2
a Pair of new Thread Stockings, 1 Pair of new dark Worsted Ditto, 1 Pair of white ribbed Yarn Ditto,?	3 m	Oct. 77	80 VI
two Pair of Stockings?	2 m	Nov. 77	62 V2
greyish stockings,^	1 m	Dec. 77	86 VI
light coloured stockings.	1 m	Jan. 78	87 VI
grey Homespun... Stockings,^	1 m	Jan. 78	21 V2
two Pair of white Cotton Stockings, *	2 m	Apr. 79	1 V2
Linen... Stockings,^	1 m	Jul. 79	101 VI
two pair of Hose,?	2 m	Sept. 79	102 VI
tow stockings,^	1 m	Jun. 80	93 V2
white Yarn Stockings^	1 m	Dec. 80	107 VI
one Pair of Thread Stockings!	1 m	Aug. 81	13 V2
White Stockings[^]... a Pair of white Stockings, a Pair of blue and white mixed Ditto, *	3 m	Apr. 82	115 VI

Table 1, continued

(^) - worn by the runaway (*) - taken with the runaway (?) - either taken with or worn (!) - stolen by the runaway

Stocking Description	Sex	Date	Page #
grey yarn stockings,^	1 m	Apr. 82	96 V2
a Pair of black and white Yarn Stockings, [^] and took another Pair of white Yarn ditto*	2 m	Apr. 82	96 V2
old white Worsted Stockings.^	1 m	May 82	115 VI
stole a Number of... Stockings,!	3 m	Jun. 82	143 V2
white Worsted Stockings,^	1 m	Sept. 82	118 VI
blue and white Silk Stockings,^	1 m	Sept. 82	118 VI
old Stockings,^	1 m	Oct. 82	119 VI
one Pair of pale blue Stockings, one Pair of white cotton Ditto, one Pair of mixed blue and white Ditto,?	3 m	Nov. 82	119 VI
one Pair of Blue woollen Stockings.?	1 m	Nov. 82	119 VI
homespun Stockings.?	1 m	Nov. 82	97 V2
black and white Yarn Stockings,^	1 m	Jan. 83	98 V2
grey woolen Stockings^	1 m	Feb. 83	122 VI
blue Stockings,^	1 m	Mar. 83	98 V2

Table 1, continued

(^) - worn by the runaway (*) - taken
(?) - taken or worn (!) - stolen

Many descriptions included nothing about stockings, but most described jackets and coats. Three hypotheses might explain this. First, many stockings may be nondescript, or as one advertisement stated, a “sundry pair of stockings [p. 76, v. 2].” Secondly, shoes and trousers or petticoat may sufficiently cover the stockings making them unimportant in recognizing the runaway. Finally, the runaway may not have had any stockings.

Running away without stockings occurred a number of times. “An indented NEGRO GIRL, about Eighteen or Nineteen Years of Age” ran away in October of 1770 “bare-footed and bare-legged [p. 58, v. 2].” “Two Apprentice Boys” ran

away in September of 1769; one of them, “a Molatto Boy, about fourteen Years old... had on when he went away... Shoes without Stockings [p. 38, v. 2].” Not all runaways described without stockings were Negro or mulatto: “living in Tiverton... an Apprentice Boy... has blue Eyes, and Sandy coloured Hair... was bare-footed” when he left in September of 1783 [p. 99, v. 2].

What these runaways owned and what they stole is often difficult to tell; it is also not always clear whether they wore the stolen clothing. One example lies with a “Servant Man... [who] had on” a coat, jacket and breeches; no other garments are mentioned as being worn. “He stole and carried with him... one Pair of Stockings [p. 12, v. 1].” Did he own these stockings but not wear them? Others are

Stocking Description	Sex	Date	Page #
white Thread Stockings	1 m	Jul. 76	42 VI
white... Stockings,	1 m	Jul. 76	42 VI
white woollen Hose.	1 m	Dec. 76	45 VI
gray Stockings.	1 m	Mar. 77	51 VI
white Stockings.	1 m	Mar. 77	55 VI
white stockings.	1 m	Mar. 77	56 VI
white woolen hose,	1 m	Jul. 77	72 VI
white Thread Stockings	1 m	Aug. 77	74 VI
blue yarn Stockings.	1 m	Sept. 77	79 VI
white Yarn Stockings:	1 m	Mar. 78	89 VI
white Yarn Stocking.	1 m	Mar. 78	90 VI
grey yarn stockings.	1 m	Apr. 78	91 VI
two pair of yarn stocking	2 m	Apr. 78	91 VI
two pair of yarn stockings	2 m	Apr. 78	91 VI
grey Worsted Stockings^	1 m	Mar. 79	1 V2
white linen... stockings^	1 m	May 79	2 V2
white yarn stockings,^	1 m	Jun. 79	3 V2
white stockings,^	1 m	Jun. 79	3 V2
blue yarn stockings.	1 m	Aug. 80	106 VI
light grey coarse hose^	1 m	Jan. 81	95 V2

white Yarn Stockings,	1 m	Mar. 81	109 VI
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Table 2: Deserted Continental soldier's stocking descriptions from Rhode Island newspaper runaway ads, 1760-1783.

described as “Had on and took with him,” making it impossible to tell what is really owned by the runaway. Although this is a study of stockings of the lower sort, items known to be stolen are kept within the data set. Stolen stockings often are markedly different from what most runaways wore.

Continental Soldier's stockings are dealt with separately (Table 2) so that issued stockings do not affect the civilian data. Other populations could be separated, such as slaves versus servants; doing so could invalidate the resulting percentages by making the data sample too small. For soldiers, only 23 pairs of stockings are described. In the future, it is hoped, stockings of all runaways advertised in other states will be gathered so that comparisons of larger data sets may be made.

The vast majority of runaways were described as having one pair of stockings (Table 1 and 2). Two runaways had “Stockings without feet [p. 19, v. 1 and p. 59, v. 2]” and one had “one pair of newly footed” stockings [p. 65, v. 2]. Taking worn out stockings and knitting a new foot was often done. Ten ads distinguished “old” stockings, while only three described “new” stockings.

The majority of runaways described had only one pair of stockings. Most runaways who were described as having more than one pair had two pairs of stockings. The most any runaway had is estimated at four pair.

To calculate percentages, an exact number of stockings must be known. In three cases an exact number was not given. In August of 1773 a horse thief, “had with him... several pair of stockings [p. 69, v. 2]”; for this study, “Several” is assumed to be three. In September of 1777 “a Parcel of Stockings [p. 60, v. 2]” was stolen. Not knowing how many are in a parcel, four pair is assumed. In another case a man “stole a Number of... Stockings [p. 143, v. 2].” Again, three pair was assumed. In all these cases no color or material is given so they should not affect the conclusions of this paper. One pair of stockings **Material** Out of 167 descriptions 79 provide evidence of material (Table 3). Of these 78% are wool. Out of the wool stockings, 66% are

was described as “white or grey yarn” and was considered as white for this study.

In almost all cases the term “stockings” is used, but four descriptions referred to “hose.” No “socks” were described on any of these runaways. One description in June (a summer month) includes “a Pair of old stocking leggings of a grey Colour [p. 6, v. 1]”. This has been included as a stocking description.

Material/ Fiber
Woolen
Yarn
Ribbed Yarn
Mixed Yarn
Worsted
Cloth Worsted
Ribbed Worsted
Mixed Ribbed and Worsted
Ribbed
Mixed
Homespun
Homespun Linen
Thread
Linen
Tow
Cotton
Crape
Silk
Fiber not known
Total

Table 3: Material of stockings worn by runaways described in Rhode Island newspapers 1760-1783.

The Lower Sort

described as yarn a coarse, locally produced wool or ordinary short-hair wool. A finer weight wool, worsted, is described in 31% of wool stockings.

Locally produced wool was sometimes referred to as woolen which made up 3% of wool stockings. Yarn or woolen is from carded wool, whereas worsted is from combed wool.⁴

Michael Cleary, in his study of *Clothing and Textiles in New Jersey 1776-1782* defines “mixt” as being made of yarn,⁵ although Cleary does not cite a source. Cleary’s choice of the word “yarn” indicates wool as a fiber. Two descriptions of mixed color stockings describe the material they are made of. One describes “mixt blue Yarn [p. 50, v. 2]” agreeing with Cleary and another describes “mixed ribb’d worsted [p. 66, v. 2]” indicating long hair combed wool as opposed to short hair carded wool. In either case mixed is made of wool. If mixed is made of wool fiber, the percentage of wool stockings may increase. Additional stockings may be mixed since they are described as being more than one color (see discussion of color below) raising this percentage further. More research should be done to determine the fiber or fibers of mixed stockings. Mixed is not believed to refer to mixing fibers in this case.

Only 11% of the stockings described are linen. These are referred to as thread,⁵ linen, tow, and one of “homespun linen.” Cotton makes up 8%. Only two pair of stockings were silk and one of these was described as crape.

It might be suspected more runaways would wear wool stockings in the winter for warmth. If most of the lower sort only own one pair of stockings, however, little seasonal difference should be found. In winter 87% and in summer 71% were described as having wool stockings, a statistically insignificant difference. In other words, almost 80% of the lower sort wore their only pair of stockings, wool stockings, regardless of season.

Why wool stockings were so common throughout the year cannot be determined at this time. A few hypotheses are presented for future research. First, wool may have been the easiest to obtain. Secondly, woolen stockings may have been less expensive than linen (unlike most garments,

Cleary, in *Clothing and Textiles in New Jersey 1776-1782*, defines “mixt - yarns made by twisting two different color fibers together to achieve a salt and pepper effect.” From 1760 to 1783 all stockings described as being of two colors

where linen was cheaper than wool); linen thread was much finer than wool and may have been more difficult to knit, increasing cost. Thirdly, wool may have been most durable and so most desirable for someone owning only one pair.

Although almost all stockings appear to be knit, a couple might be sewn from cloth. One description in August of 1771 includes an “Apprentice Lad... [who] had on and took with him... light cloth Worsted Stockings [p. 19, v. 1].” It is very possible this light cloth refers to color not fabric. Usually when referring to cloth as a color runaway descriptions say “cloth coloured.” Another newspaper ad describes an “Apprentice Boy... [who] is a very conceited Fellow: Had on and took with him, when he went away,” in October of 1773 “a Pair of blue and White Crape Stockings [p. 30, v. 1].” Crape is a fabric made of raw silk or worsted sometimes mixed with silk.⁴ Although listed as silk, crape may be made of worsted wool fiber.

None of the stockings were described as clocked, a decoration on either side of the stocking woven in during frame or hand knitting or embroidered after.

Color Of the 167 stocking descriptions included in this study, 89 described color (Table 4). The most common color described was white, 24%. Second most frequent was Grey with 20% and blue 18%. Mixed made up 11% and black 10%. Another 9% make up stockings described as being two colors, black and white, blue and white, black and blue and blue grey. It is likely these are mixed. The remaining 7% include light, dark and patterns such as dark clouded and mottled. Bright colors such as purple, red, pink, orange, and yellow were completely absent from the descriptions. Although green stockings were not found in any of the descriptions from 1760 to 1783, in 1786 “mixed green Stockings [p. 130 v. 1]” were described. No other Rhode Island runaways had stockings described as being green from 1730 to 1800.

either did not mention the pattern or were described as mixed. No striped stockings were described in Rhode Island runaway ads until March of 1797, the only such description in the entire 18th Century. Only one pair is described as spotted, and

that not until June of 1799. Because of this, it is likely many stockings described as being two colors are mixed. Mixed stockings may make up about 18% of the stockings, as common as blue, if this is correct. One exception to this is one pair of “blue and white Silk Stockings [p. 118, v. 1]” which may have a different pattern since they are silk.

Florence Montgomery, in *Textiles in America 1650-1870* describes clouds as “Fabrics with clouded, or shaded, effects produced by dyeing or printing warp threads in different colors prior to weaving.”⁴ Only one pair is described as being “dark clouded Worsted [p. 29, v. 1]” however in 1758 another pair was described as being “clouded [p. 26, v. 2].”

Color	1760-1769	1770-1783	Total	%
White	4	17	21	24%
(Sheep's) Grey	5	13	18	20%
Blue	5	5	10	18%
Deep Blue	1		1	
Pale (Light) Blue	2	3	5	
Mixed	1	3	4	11%
Mixed Blue and White		4	4	
Mixed Black and White		1	1	
Mixed Blue	1		1	
(sheeps) Black	7	2	9	10%
Black and White		4	4	4%
Blue and White		2	2	2%
Light		3	3	3%
Dark		2	2	2%
Dark Clouded		1	1	1%
Mottled	1		1	1%
Black and Blue	1		1	1%
Blue Gray	1		1	1%
Total for which color is given	29	60	89	

Table 4: Colors of stockings worn by runaways described in Rhode Island newspapers 1760-1783.

Only one pair is described as “ribb’d mottled worsted [p. 38, v. 2].” Mottled may be either a spotted or mixed stocking. Since a 1799 ad describes a stocking as “spotted Cotton”, mottled is most likely the appearance of a mixed stocking.

It is of particular interest that no stripes or spots are mentioned during the time period that we portray, suggesting that this pattern was uncommon if it existed at all.

From 1730 to 1750 only seven pair of stockings are described. In the entire decade of the 1780s, 49 and in the 1790s, 55 pair of stockings are described. In none of these descriptions were black stockings included. In the 1760s, with only 39 pair, 7 are black and in the 1770s with 100 pair, 2 are black. This may show a sudden fashion trend or may be an artifact of the small data sample.

Continental Soldiers

Discussion The soldiers have been separated here because of the possibility of issued stockings influencing the overall data set. Many of these soldiers come from militia units or have just enlisted. Subsequent authors may determine which soldiers have issued stockings and which do not.

Material/Fiber	Number	Percent of total	% by Fiber
Woolen	2	11%	78%
Yarn	11	61%	
Worsted	1	6%	
Thread	2	11%	17%
Linen	1	6%	
Coarse	1	6%	6%
Not mentioned	5		
Total	23	101%	101%

Table 5: Material of deserted soldiers' stockings from Rhode Island runaway ads 1775-1783.

Material In this small sample of 23 soldiers, 78% are described as having wool stockings (Table 5). Most soldiers wore yarn, while a couple of woolen stockings and one worsted are mentioned. None of the soldiers wore ribbed or mixed stockings. Only two soldiers wore thread and one linen stockings. No other materials were described.

Color	Number	Percent
White	13	68%
(light) Gray	4	21%
Blue	2	11%
Not mentioned	4	
Total	23	100%

Table 6: Colors of deserted soldier's stockings from Rhode Island newspaper runaway ads 1775-1783.

Color The majority of soldiers, 68%, wore white stockings (Table 6). Only four wore gray and two wore blue. No other colors were described on soldiers.

Conclusions

The majority of poor people owned only one pair of wool yarn stockings. Wool was worn regardless of season. White, grey, and blue stockings were most common. Even among mixed stockings white and blue mixes were most common. Mixed and black stockings were slightly less common possibly with a trend for black in the 1760s; and few other colors were described. The majority of soldiers wore white wool yarn stockings.

The book *Cloth and Costume 1750 to 1800*⁶ allows a comparison of stockings worn by the middling sort and people of means in Pennsylvania, with those of the lower sort described in this study. The book compiles data from inventories taken after the death of property owners. Looking at Table 7, it is striking the number of wool stockings that were described in both cases and how few cotton and silk! Until regional differences are explored, both cotton and silk stockings should be treated as being uncommon.

Simply reading isolated descriptions to find what exists can be terribly misleading. Finding several mentions of, for example, cotton

stockings, gives a false impression that they were common when in fact they were not. The best way to determine what was common is to count all references within a population, and calculate percentages. Once this is done, we have a baseline to work from. Adjustments to that baseline can then be made based on regional differences or other distinctions.

Notes

1. Taylor, Maureen Alice, 1995, *Runaways, Deserters, and Notorious Villains From Rhode Island Newspapers Volume 1: The Providence Gazette, 1762-1800*; Picton Press, Camden, Main, 185 p.
2. Taylor, Maureen Alice and Sweet, John Wood, 2001, *Runaways, Deserters, and Notorious Villains From Rhode Island Newspapers Volume 2: Additional notices from The Providence Gazette, 1762-1800 as well as advertisements from all other Rhode Island Newspapers from 1732-1800*; Picton Press, Rockport, Main, 212 p.
3. A great thanks is extended to Don Hagist who provided references on runaway descriptions and suggested I look into these as potential research topics. I thank Norm Fuss for interesting in depth discussions on how to treat some of the data and Phyllis Dickenson for our discussion on fiber preparation and spinning. As always my wife, Laura, deserves special thanks for her proofreading and direct criticisms.
4. Montgomery, Florence M., 1984, *Textiles in America 1650-1870: A dictionary based on original documents, prints and paintings, commercial records, American merchants' papers, shopkeepers' advertisements, and pattern books with original swatches of cloth*; W.W. Norton & Company, New York. See p. 375 for worsted, 207 for crape and 201 for clouds.

In 1783 Jonas Hanway wrote *A Proposal for County Naval Free*

Schools a form of charity school to England's poor. Hanway took a special interest in boys' feet who were allowed more stockings than men. Hanway himself, in bad weather, wore three pairs at once. He wrote, "Stockings of worsted, well-made, are the cheapest in the issue. They are not so clumsy as yarn, nor heat the feet so much... In the summer season, unbleached thread will be best." In *Three Letters on the Subject of the Marine Society* in 1758, Hanway advised, "Constant charge is given, that the stockings be not too short in the feet, a fault which often happens in these coarse goods." Hanway, Jonas, 1783, *A Proposal for County Naval Free Schools*, p. 54 and 1758, *Three Letters on the Subject of the Marine Society*, Letter III, both are cited in Cunningham, Phyllis and Lucas, Catherine, 1978, *Charity Costumes of children, scholars, almsfolk, pensioners*; Adam & Charles Black, London, p. 200.

In 1726 Daniel Defoe wrote *The Complete English Tradesman* (as cited in Rutt, Richard, 1989, *A History of Hand Knitting*; Interweave Press, Loveland, Co., p. 87). In this, Defoe listed the clothes of the poorest countryman as including "stockings being of yarn" and a middling tradesman might have stockings made of "worsted, not of yarn". Tandy and Charles Hersh in *Cloth and Costume 1750 to 1800 Cumberland County, Pennsylvania* state, "Usually it was in the more extensive wardrobes that worsted stockings were found."

5. Cleary, Michael, 1976, *Clothing and textiles in New Jersey 1776-1782: a study on the New Jersey Archives, Newspaper Abstracts, Second Series, Volume 1-5*; Plainfield, New Jersey. See p. 112 for thread and 109 for mixt.

6. Hersh, Tandy and Charles, 1995, *Cloth and Costume 1750 to 1800, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania*; Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 211 p. See pp. 120-122.

Fiber	Number of Stockings for Civilian Lower Sort	%New England Civilian Lower Sort	% Pennsylvania Middling & those of Means
Wool	60	78%	47%
Linen	9	11%	30%
Cotton	6	8%	18%
Silk	2	3%	5%
Total	59	101%	100%

Table 7: Comparison of material of stockings worn by civilian lower sort in this study and those described in inventories (middling to those of means) reported in Cloth and Costume 1750 to 1800.

This is a reprint of an article that appeared in:

Dickfoss, Paul V., 2001, “grey worsted,” “mixt blue Yarn,” “White ribb’d worsted”: Stockings of Runaways Advertised in Rhode Island; in *The Brigade Dispatch*, Volume XXXI, Number 3, Autumn 2001, pp. 2-9.